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Contact

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Molly Elder - 515-725-4116

www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov

molly.elder@iwd.iowa.gov

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Gov. Reynolds Announces Future Ready Iowa Employer Innovation Fund Recipients

DES MOINES – Today, Governor Kim Reynolds announced the first 13 recipients of the new Future Ready Iowa Employer Innovation Fund, a matching grant designed to help employers carry out solutions to help their employees achieve postsecondary training and education. The first round of Employer Innovation Fund Grants will distribute over \$400,000 in funds to employers across the state.

“The Employer Innovation Fund drives innovation in meeting the workforce challenges of today and tomorrow,” said Gov. Reynolds. “These public-private partnerships address barriers for Iowans looking to get the training they need for a life-changing career. The collaboration happening at the grassroots level serves as a catalyst for Future Ready Iowa’s continued success.

The purpose of the grant is to provide opportunities for working Iowans to earn non-credit and for-credit postsecondary credentials leading to high-demand jobs in the state. Employers, community leaders and others can apply by submitting a proposal for implementing a creative solution to their local workforce needs.

“Employers are a critical part of reaching our Future Ready Iowa goal of having 70 percent of Iowans with postsecondary credentials by 2025,” said Director Beth Townsend, Iowa Workforce Development. “The Employer Innovation Fund is unique because it empowers employers to find creative ways to strengthen their local workforce and build upon Iowa’s talent pipeline.”

Employer Innovation Fund Recipients include:

- **Ruan/Des Moines Area Community College** - The grant will provide support for 3 students, who are currently employees of Ruan, to participate in DMACC's Employer Sponsored Technology Pathway program that will include two parts of the Code DSM training. The match is being paid by Ruan Transportation Management Systems. DMACC will make an effort to recruit underrepresented groups to participate in the program and to qualify the student must be a high school graduate with no post-secondary credential.
- **Four Oaks Family and Children's Services** - Four Oaks' Total Child Workforce (TCW), will, in an effort to reach underserved youth who are not currently being reached by traditional education to employment programs, enroll 30 youth in Linn County in a program that will provide soft skill training, mentoring, and 4-week internships. Each participant will receive a weekly stipend to cover child care, transportation and food security and will learn about financial responsibilities promoting family stability during the program. Internships will take place at local employers Van Meter Inc. (electrical distribution industry), Mercy Medical Center (health care), Toyota Financial Services (customer service in financial industry). Each participant will include a success coach to help them find and keep jobs in high-demand industries and/or training and education programs.
- **Kirkwood Community Colleges and Iowa City-Cedar Rapids (ICRIowa)** - The Expanding Credentials through Pathways program will target 60 high school students with 25% representing marginalized and diverse populations. Participants will complete a post-secondary CTE credential, earn high school credit, and participate in WBL that will lead to the pursuit of training in high demand occupations by working with local employers including TSF Structures, Inc., UnityPoint Health, Oak Street Manufacturers, BM&F Inc., and Cummins Manufacturing.
- **New Bohemian Innovation Collaborative** - A 501(c)(3) organization that wants to award 10 scholarships to students for their Delta V coding program as part of their Diversity Tuition Award Program. Scholarships would cover tuition, a laptop and textbooks. The program is 20 weeks long and 95% of past graduates have secured employment in the IT industry within 180 days of course completion, with an average starting salary of \$70,000. The

scholarships will be targeted at low income and other underrepresented groups in the IT industries.

- **Central College-Pella Talent Pipeline Apprenticeship School** - Provides core curriculum for high-demand occupations with a primary focus of providing wrap around services for individuals seeking apprenticeship opportunities after high school. The integrated system will provide professional mentorship as well as opportunities for participants to earn high demand stackable credentials and associates degrees in addition to completing apprenticeships. The programs will guide students in a purposeful way from high school to adulthood and meaningful employment. The leading cohort for this project represent Pella Corporation, Vermeer, Precision Inc., Pella Community Schools, DMACC, Central College and the PACE Alliance.
- **Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque** – Enhance Opportunity Dubuque program. This program will increase the skilled workforce through child care support for students while they obtain training at Northeast Iowa Community College in high-demand certificate programs in construction, health care, manufacturing and more. Eligible students include low-skilled, under and unemployed individuals. The program will fund licensed child care for students while they are enrolled in training and for up to 12 months after obtaining eligible, full-time employment as the payer of last as the parent achieves self-sufficiency to afford ongoing costs of child care. Project outcomes, 50 parents will enroll and utilize the child care support to complete training and 40 graduates will move into full-time employment with child care support for 12 months.
- **Oskaloosa School District**- Partnering with Musco, Clow, Oskaloosa Engineering & Manufacturing, Interpower, Mahaska Health Partnership, Cunningham, Oskaloosa Chamber, Oskaloosa Education Foundation, Mahaska Recreation Foundation and Mahaska Economic Development. This project will increase the number of students gaining post-secondary education in the form of certificates and employment in high demand fields by providing transportation for students to attend Career Academies at Indian Hills Community College. Currently students must transport themselves to take advantage of these programs which is a financial barrier to over 50% of

the area population. This project will include the communities of Oskaloosa, Eddyville/Blakesburg and North Mahaska.

- **Franklin County Development Association** - The Association is partnering with Buresh Buildings, La Luz Hispana, a Latino outreach center, and North Iowa Area Community College. This program seeks to increase awareness and understanding of high demand jobs in the area by addressing misconceptions and to provide funding support to address barriers such as books, childcare, fees, tools and transportation. Transportation for individuals from the most densely populated area of the county, Hampton, requires a 30 or 45 minute drive to access training and the cost of this transportation as well as the child care required can make attending cost prohibitive. The program will support 2-4 students enrolled in programs that lead to employment in high demand fields.
- **McNeilus Companies** – McNeilus, an Oshkosh Corporation is a leading manufacturer of refuse collection vehicles, concrete mixers and batch plants in North America. Iowa Contract Fabricators Inc has been acquired by McNeilus Truck and Manufacturing. This location is in Riceville, Iowa and will be drawing employees from Northern and Central Iowa including Mason City and Charles City. The company will partner with Riverland Community College to offer best in class welding training to individuals who have no welding skills. This model has proved successful in other locations. The Riceville location is short 20 welding positions and this program will bring the weld training on-site via the Riverland weld training trailer. Three classes of 8 people per class will be held, with a goal of 20% diverse or underrepresented individuals who face barriers to employment. During the training students receive 95% of the base rate of full welders pay. Weld trainees then receive on the job training to meet key metrics and be promoted to welder. Individuals who need more on-the-job training to be successful are supported through that process.
- **Mahaska Health Partnership** - Lead by Mahaska Health in Oskaloosa this program will be addressing a critical shortage of medical laboratory assistants by identifying current high school seniors who have appropriate academic achievement and a socio-economic or financial need. The goal is to remove financial barriers for students with a desire to attend the training program and have a guaranteed position after completion. Capacity is to

identify and support 3 students. This program also includes a laboratory internship and students are assigned a mentor from the Mahaska Health Laboratory. While high school students are a target population, community members can also participate.

- **The Well** – The Well is a non-profit organization based in Pella and Knoxville. Key partners include: LDJ and Vermeer who provide manufacturing contracts to The Well that enable relevant training for Well employees. Well Works is a program that employs and supports people who have previously struggled maintaining a job which happens for many different reasons. Through an 18-month process of employment and education individuals who face significant barriers to successful employment are supported to success defined as graduating from the program, moving to stable employment and financial independence off of taxpayer funded programs. Well Works expands opportunities for their employees to finish education they never finished, and receive certifications and program support for areas where they have struggled to include finances, substance abuse and education. Well Works specifically supports obtaining work in high-demand fields that include advanced manufacturing production, installation, maintenance and carpentry. This program would provide opportunity for 20 individuals.
- **TMC Transportation** – In partnership with Youth Shelter and Services (YSS) this program will create and implement a TMC Transportation and Logistics Training program which will address regional employment needs and provide paid training and employment for under-represented and low-income individuals living in Story County. The program includes 6 CDL training program positions, 2 paid internships for Story County high school students and 2 paid logistics internships for Story County high school students. TMC will collaborate with YSS to recruit and support program participants.
- **Community Foundation of Greater Muscatine**- Fueling the Future pilot project. Partnering with Trinity Muscatine Public Health, Muscatine Community College, City of Muscatine, Muscatine Center for Social Action, Aligned Impact Muscatine, and a collective of Muscatine employers. This program will provide an intensive 6 week upskilling in the high-demand fields of welding and certified nursing assistants (CNAs) and participants will receive welding or CNA certificates. The project will target adults in low-

income families of elementary-aged children receiving weekend “backpack” food subsidies in Muscatine. Innovative wrap-around services will be provided to families participating. The six-week certificate programs being offered through Muscatine Community College will be geared toward adult learners with a focused, intentional accelerated curriculum to reduce the potential life barriers that can get in the way of student completion. Area hiring employers will participate in paid part-time internships during the six-week sessions with commitments to hire qualified individuals upon completion. Six months of follow up is also part of the program to help ensure long-term success. Twelve individuals will participate in the initial pilot.

The second round of Employer Innovation Fund applications will begin Sept. 4 and close on Nov. 8, 2019.

For more information about the Future Ready Iowa Employer Innovation Fund, visit www.FutureReadyIowa.gov/innovation

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